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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 178320

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CHEROKEE, EYES ONLY FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

FOL RPT TEL AVIV 5591 ACTION SECSTATE 29 JUL 77 QUOTE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 5591

NODIS
CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, US
SUBJECT: ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY

REF: TEL AVIV 5570

1. BEGIN ASKED ME TO MEET WITH DAYAN AND HIM THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 28. I TOOK THE DCM WITH ME. WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE WE FOUND EVRON ALSO PRESENT. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SET THE STAGE FOR AN IMPORTANT DEMARCHE AND THAT HE WAS
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INTENT UPON EMPHASIZING THE GRAVITY OF THE OCCASION. HE MENTIONED MORE THAN ONCE HIS HOPE THAT WHAT HE WAS TELLING ME WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION. I ASSURED HIM IT WOULD.

2. THE FIRST AND PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF THE MEETING WAS SETTLEMENT POLICY, SPECIFICALLY THE DEPARTMENT'S NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE LEGALIZATION OF QADOUM, OFRA, FRLMA'ALE ADUMIN. THE PRIME MINISTER BEGAN WITH ALL SERIOUSNESS BY NOTING THAT SINCE JANUARY ISRAEL HAD

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BEEN "ATTACKED" BY PLO TERRORISTS 85 TIMES ("IN THE LAST 24 HOURS 41 PEOPLE HAD BEEN WOUNDED"). NOT ONE WORD HAD BEEN SAID BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN REGRET OF THIS "BLOODSHED." BUT PEOPLE SAY THIS ORGANIZATION (PLO) SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT GENEVA CONFERENCE. AT THE SAME TIME THE DEPARTMENT HAS TWICE "CONDEMNED" ISRAEL SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER TOOK OFFICE. WHEN THE GOI COMPARES THE U.S. SILENCE ABOUT BLOODSHED WITH THE REBUKES ABOUT SETTLEMENTS, THE QUESTION OF JUSTICE ARISES. DO NOT PLO ATTACKS RAISE THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS? "THE RIGHT TO LIFE IS THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT OF ALL."

3. BEGIN THEN SAID HE HAD BEEN VERY RESTRAINED IN THE KNESSET JULY 27. HE NEVER ONCE THOUGHT THAT A DECISION IN WHICH BOTH THE GOI AND THE JEWISH AGENCY HAD PARTICIPATED TO "GIVE PEOPLE ALREADY LIVING IN THESE SETTLEMENTS SIMPLE HUMAN RIGHTS" (SCHOOLS, ELECTRICITY, ETC.) WOULD EARN A REBUKE BY THE U.S. HE WAS THEREFORE COMPLETELY TAKEN BY SURPRISE AT THE USE OF THE WORD "DISAPPOINTMENT" BY THE SECRETARY AND BY THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN. DID THIS MEAN THAT BEGIN COULD NOT BE COUNTED ON TO KEEP HIS WORD? I INTERRUPTED TO

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ANSWER THIS IN THE NEGATIVE, NOTING THAT THE SECRETARY HAD SPECIFICALLY SAID BEGIN HAD GIVEN NO COMMITMENT TO US. THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED THAT I WOULD RECALL THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID THE ARABS WOULD INTERPRET NEW SETTLEMENTS AS A SIGN OF BAD FAITH; HOWEVER HE HAD ADDED, "BUT THE DECISION IS UP TO YOU." SUCH WORDS BY THE PRESIDENT WERE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE ISRAELIS, BEGIN STRESSED. HE HAD ANSWERED THE PRESIDENT WITH A RHETORICAL QUESTION ABOUT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FORBIDDING JEWS TO SETTLE IN TOWNS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA WHEN THEY COULD SETTLE IN THE SAME NAMED TOWNS IN THE U.S.

4. BEGIN THE HISTORIAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAWYER THEN TOOK OVER. JORDAN HAD INVADED AND CONQUERED "THIS PART OF OUR LAND" IN 1948. ("WE OBJECT TO THE TERM WEST BANK.") THERE IS A RULE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW THAT NO RIGHT DERIVES FROM A WRONG. IN THE EARLY '50'S ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN BY KING ABDULLAH TO ANNEX THIS TERRITORY. THIS ANNEXATION HAS NEVER BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE U.S. ("OR EGYPT," DAYAN CHIMED IN). WHAT KIND OF SOVEREIGNTY DERIVES FROM AGGRESSION AND NON-RECOGNITION, THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED? BECAUSE OF THIS INVASION, AGGRESSION, AND OCCUPATION ISRAEL DID NOT FEEL ITSELF IN VIOLATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF '49. ISRAEL IS NOT AN OCCUPYING POWER, BECAUSE HERE WAS NO SOVEREIGNTY IN THE FORMER RULER.

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BEGIN SAID HE HAD ASKED THE PRESIDENT TO INSTRUCT USUN
NOT TO REPEAT GOVERNOR SCRANTON'S 1976 STATEMENTS ON
SETTLEMENTS. THE PRESIDENT'S OPINION MAY DIFFER FROM
THE ISRAELI OPINION, BUT HE SHOULD NOT CALL THE SETTLEMENTS
"ILLEGAL." NEITHER HE NOR THE PRESIDENT HAD
GIVEN A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER ON THE SETTLEMENT
ISSUE.

5. WE ARE FRIENDS, THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED. THE
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FOREIGN MINISTER AND HE WANTED TO BUILD UP A COMPLETE
RAPPORT WITH US. ISRAEL IS SMALL BUT IT IS SOVEREIGN.
WHY COULD NOT "THIS LITTLE MATTER" HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED
THROUGH OUR AMBASSADORS? EVRON SAID THAT DINITZ HAD
ONLY BEEN TOLD BY ATHERTON THAT A PRESS STATEMENT WAS
UNDER PREPARATION-AND HAD PHONED JERUSALEM TO FIND
OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

6. SINCE BEGIN HAD PUT DOWN THE PAPER WITH NOTES FROM
WHICH HE HAD BEEN SPEAKING, I BEGIN MY RESPONSE
BY SAYING THAT I HAD BEEN VERY UPSET WITH THIS EPISODE
AND HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH MY COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON.
BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS LIVE IN A FISHBOWL-AT THE MERCY
OF THE LATEST WIRE SERVICE FLASH-AND OUR SPOKESMEN
HAVE TO BE PREPARED ON ALMOST EVERY TOPIC. BEGIN
INTERRUPTED TO ASK IF OUR SPOKESMAN COULD NOT MERELY
HAVE CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING THAT WE WOULD GET IN
TOUCH WITH THE GOI AND FIND OUT. I SAID, YES, THAT
WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. BUT I WAS SURE THAT IF WE
HAD SAID ANYTHING DIFFERENT ON THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE

FROM WHAT WE HAD BEEN SAYING FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS,
CONSIDERABLE DIPLOMATIC SIGNIFICANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN
ATTACHED TO THE DIFFERENCE. I PERSONALLY THOUGHT OUR
STATEMENT WAS QUITE LOW-KEY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
I WOULD NOT CALL IT A CALCULATED REBUKE, BUT A REACTION
OF GENUINE DISAPPOINTMENT. THE PRESIDENT HAD
MADE VERY CLEAR TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HE REGARDED
A DECISION ON THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE (I.E., NO NEW
SETTLEMENTS) AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING
PROGRESS TOWARD GENEVA. IN THAT LIGHT, "DISAPPOINTED"
DOES NOT SEEM TOO STRONG A WORD. I COULD AGREE THAT
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THE PROCEDURE WE HAD FOLLOWED IN THIS INSTANCE WAS
PERHAPS NOT THE BEST, AND I WOULD DO WHAT I COULD
TO SEE WE DID IT DIFFERENTLY IN THE FUTURE.

7. IN THE MEANTIME, I SAID, I HOPE THAT WE CAN KEEP OUR

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WORDS MEASURED AND COOL AND THAT WE CAN CONSULT BEFOREHAND.
THE ISRAELIS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS
OF THE PROBLEM FOR US IN HELPING THEM GET TO A PEACE
CONFERENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE NOW SEEMS TO BE A GOOD
CHANCE THAT THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE WILL BE RAISED IN
THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND THAT WOULD HARDLY BE
HELPFUL.

8. DAYAN PICKED UP THIS POINT AND SAID: "YOU STARTED
IT." HE EXPLAINED THAT WHAT HE MEANT WAS THAT IF THE
U.S. SAID PUBLICLY THAT SETTLEMENTS WERE ILLEGAL AND
AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE, NO ARAB COULD SAY LESS. WHY
SHOULDN'T THE ARABS THEN TRY TO CONDEMN ISRAEL AT THE
UN? BEGIN CHIMED IN TO SAY THE ISRAELIS WERE DEEPLY
HURT; IT WAS MORE THAN A DISAPPOINTMENT. WHY DID THEY
DESERVE THIS? HE COULD AGREE THAT SOMETIMES WE WOULD
DIFFER. THAT WAS ALL RIGHT, BUT WHY MUST WE MAKE AN
"INTERNATIONAL SCANDAL?" NOW THE UK AND WALDHEIM HAD
FOLLOWED OUR LEAD IN CONDEMNING ISRAEL. THE PRIME
MINISTER REPEATED THAT HE WAS DEEPLY HURT, ESPECIALLY
SINCE THIS CAME SO SOON AFTER THE "WONDERFUL RECEPTION"
HE HAD RECEIVED IN THE U.S.

9. DAYAN THEN TOOK OVER AGAIN. HE MAINTAINED THAT
WHEN THE MA'ALE ADUMIN SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED
THE U.S. HAD NOT SAID A WORD IN OBJECTION. NOW YEARS
LATER WHEN THE SETTLEMENTS COMMITTEE HAD DECIDED TO
GRANT "CERTAIN SERVICES" TO THAT SETTLEMENT THE U.S.
MAKES A FUSS ABOUT IT. MA'ALE ADUMIN WAS LOCATED ON
ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE ROUTES IN THE OCCUPIED
AREAS: THE PRINCIPAL AND ONLY ROAD BETWEEN JERUSALEM
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AND JORDAN. WHEN THE SETTLEMENTS COMMISSION WANTS TO
INSTALL A SCHOOL THERE, THERE IS A LOUD U.S. REACTION.
THE ISRAELIS BELIEVE WE ARE FOLLOWING A DOUBLE STANDARD-
"IT JUST ISN'T FAIR."

10. DAYAN WENT ON TO EXPATITE ABOUT THE ARAB ATTITUDE.
HE KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE, HE SAID, THAT WHAT REALLY
MATTERS FOR THE ARABS IS TAKING NEW LAND IN THE
OCCUPIED AREAS. IS WHAT THE ISRAELIS HAD DONE AN
OBSTACLE TO GENEVA? THE U.S. SAYS THE ARABS CANNOT
AGREE WITH THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY; HE PERSONALLY
DID NOT KNOW IF THE U.S. WAS QUALIFIED TO SAY WHAT
THE ARABS COULD LIVE WITH. HE DID KNOW THAT IF WE PROCEEDED
ALONG OUR PRESENT PATH WE WOULD FIND IT MUCH
MORE DIFFICULT TO GET TO GENEVA; IN FACT IT WOULD
BECOME DOUBLY DIFFICULT IN ARAB EYES.

11. TURNING TO JERUSALEM, DAYAN SAID HE KNEW THE ARAB
ATTITUDE. IF THE U.S. PERSISTED IN QUOTING FROM THE

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GENEVA CONVENTION THE ARABS WOULD DEMAND A HALT TO ALL
BUILDING IN EAST JERUSALEM UNTIL THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.
FOR TEN YEARS, HE SAID, THE ISRAELIS HAD BEEN BUILDING
IN THAT AREA. WHILE THE ARABS DO NOT CONSIDER THIS
CONSTRUCTION LEGAL THEY HAVE NEVER SAID THAT IT WOULD
BE AN OBSTACLE TO GENEVA. BEGIN WAS THE ONLY ISRAELI
PRIME MINISTER, DAYAN ADDED, WHO HAD SAID THAT
"EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE."

12. I SAID THAT I COULD CONFIRM THAT DAYAN HAD EXPLAINED
TO ME THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED IT IMPOSSIBLE NOT
TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE SETTLEMENTS AUTHORIZED
BY THE PREVIOUS (RABIN) GOVERNMENT, AND I HAD REPORTED
THIS FACT TO WASHINGTON. ADDRESSING THE PRIME MINISTER
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AND "THINKING PERSONALLY" ABOUT THIS INCIDENT, I SAID
I BELIEVED THAT IT WAS PERHAPS TOO BAD THAT HE HAD
ONLY BEEN RHETORICAL IN HIS ANSWER TO THE PRESIDENT'S
QUESTION; PERHAPS WITH HINDSIGHT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
BEST IF HE HAD SAID TO THE PRESIDENT CLEARLY WHAT HE HAD NOW SAID
TO ME ABOUT COMPLETING THE PLANS OF THE
PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. BEGIN RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NOT
WANTED TO ANSWER THE PRESIDENT IN A WAY WHICH WOULD
HAVE SEEMED TO BE A DIRECT REJECTION, SO HE HAD USED
THE ARGUMENT ABOUT SETTLEMENTS IN BIBLICAL NAMED TOWNS
IN THE U.S. HE HAD USED THE SAME ARGUMENT ON "MEET THE
PRESS." WHAT HE HAD MEANT TO GET ACROSS TO THE
PRESIDENT WAS THAT HE WOULD BRING THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS
TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ISRAELI CABINET, AND HE HAD DONE
SO, BUT THAT A TOTAL HALT OF SETTLEMENT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.
PRIOR TO HIS RETURN, AND WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE, DAYAN
HAD PUT TO ME A PROPOSAL ABOUT SETTLEMENTS (TEL AVIV
5442). ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED, HE FULLY
ACCEPTED THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S PROPOSAL AND WAS DIS-
APPOINTED IN THE NEGATIVE U.S. REPLY.

13. BEGIN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WANTED SECRETARY VANCE
TO KNOW THAT HE WOULD BE RECEIVED IN ALL HOSPITALITY;
HE IS "A FRIEND OF ISRAEL." BUT, THE PRIME MINISTER
EMPHASIZED, HE MUST ASK US NOT TO GIVE ISRAEL ANY MORE
PUBLIC REBUKES. "LET US PLEDGE AS FRIENDS THAT WE WILL
CONSULT EACH OTHER. IT WAS NOT PROPER TO REBUKE A
SOVEREIGN COUNTRY LIKE ISRAEL. IT WAS ALSO NOT FAIR
TO ISRAEL WHICH HAS BEEN COOPERATING WITH THE U.S.
ISRAEL SHOULD BE CONSULTED, NOT REBUKED."

14. I REPLIED THAT I WOULD BE DELIGHTED IF WE COULD

WORK OUT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. I THOUGHT THE SECRETARY
WOULD WANT ME TO SAY THAT HIS REACTION WAS DUE AT LEAST
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IN PART TO THE FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY SURPRISED.
HE HAD NOT BEEN WARNED ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT. TIMING
WAS VERY IMPORTANT. EVRON SAID HE DID NOT SEE HOW THE
SECRETARY COULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISED SINCE THE PRIME
MINISTER HAD GONE TO QADOUM IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS
ELECTION AND HIS INTENTIONS HAD BEEN NO SECRET.

15. DAYAN THEN SAID THAT HE WAS GOING TO PROPOSE ON
HIW OWN TO THE ISRAELI CABINET THAT BETWEEN NOW AND THE
SECRETARY'S VISIT THERE BE NO NEW SETTLEMENT DECISION
TAKEN. THE SECOND PART OF HIS PROPOSAL WOULD BE THAT
AFTER THE SECRETARY'S VISIT, SOME NEW SETTLEMENTS
MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN ALREADY EXISTING MILITARY
COMPOUNDS (I.E. HIS PREVIOUS PROPOSAL - TEL AVIV 5442).
WITH MORE EMOTION THAN USUAL FOR HIM, DAYAN SAID THAT
HE WOULD "ALWAYS CONSIDER JUDEA AND SAMARIA PART OF MY
LIFE." HE DID NOT ASK OUR APPROVAL OF HIS PROPOSAL;
HE HAD NOW LEARNED HIS LESSON ON THAT APPROACH. BUT
HE THOUGHT THE ARAB REACTION WOULD BE MANAGEABLE IF WE
DID NOT INFLUENCE IT BY OUR STATEMENTS. BEGIN CAME IN
TO SAY THAT HIS PROPOSAL BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD
HIS APPROVAL AND HE WOULD SUPPORT IT IN THE KNESSET
AND WITH SHARON: UNTIL THE SECRETARY COMES NO FURTHER
DECISIONS ON SETTLEMENTS. FURTHERMORE, HE WANTED
AGREEMENT THAT WE WERE NOT GOING TO MAKE WHAT HE
CALLED "NEGATIVE STATEMENTS" IN PUBLIC. HE WOULD
THEN TELL THE SECRETARY CLEARLY DURING THE
VISIT ABOUT FUTURE PLANS.

16. I WARNED BEGIN AND DAYAN THAT THEY CANNOT EXPECT US
TO AGREE TO ANY SUCH PROPOSAL AS DAYAN'S, OR EVEN
ACQUIESCE OPENLY IN IT, BECAUSE OF OUR LONG-ESTABLISHED
LEGAL POSITION AGAINST NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE
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OCCUPIED AREAS. BEGIN THEN WENT INTO AN EXPLANATION
OF ARTICLE 49 OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION, LAYING HEAVY
EMPHASIS ON THE WORD "DEPORT." ISRAEL, HE SAID, WAS
CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO DEPORT ANY OF ITS PEOPLE INTO
THE OCCUPIED AREA.

17. REALIZING THAT WE WERE BEGINNING TO COME FULL CIRCLE,
I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I WOULD REPORT FAITHFULLY
AND FULLY WHAT HE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SAID TO
ME. I WAS SURE THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD BE VERY GRATE-
FUL FOR THIS INDICATION OF THE ISRAELI INTENTION NOT
TO ESTABLISH ANY FURTHER NEW SETTLEMENTS UNTIL HIS
ARRIVAL. AT THE TIME OF HIS VISIT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE
TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE QUESTION CANDIDLY, AS WE WERE NOW

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DOING. BEGIN AGREED AND SAID THAT HE ALSO WANTED TO SEE A HALT PUT TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS. BEGIN CONCLUDED BY SAYING WE WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH YOU, ABLE TO EXTEND MUTUAL HELP TO EACH OTHER.

18. AS WE WERE WALKING OUT THE PRIME MINISTER AND I DECIDED THAT IN ANSWER TO ANY PRESS QUERIES WE WOULD MERELY SAY THAT WE HAD HAD AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH REGARD TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT.

19. POSTSCRIPT: LATER IN THE EVENING EVRON TOLD ME HOW DELIGHTED THEY ALL WERE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS, WHICH WERE BEING MADE AT THE PRECISE TIME THIS STICKY CONVERSATION WAS TAKING PLACE. I TELEPHONED BEGIN THIS MORNING TO SAY I WAS JUST COMPLETING MY DETAILED REPORT ON OUR MEETING AND TO ASK WHETHER HE WANTED TO ADD ANY COMMENTS IN LIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS. HE WAS VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY. HE SAID HE WAS FEELING MUCH BETTER TODAY "AFTER OUR EXCELLENT TALK YESTERDAY," AND AS A RESULT OF THE PRESIDENT'S FINE

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PRESS CONFERENCE RESPONSES. HE ASKED ME TO PLEASE ADD TO MY REPORT HIS DEEP GRATITUDE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S GOOD WORDS, ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE NATURE OF THEIR PRIVATE CONVERSATION. HE WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASED THAT THE PRESIDENT "HAD DEFENDED BEGIN" AND MADE CLEAR THAT NO COMMITMENTS HAD BEEN VIOLATED. HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE OVERALL TONE, WARMTH, AND UNDERSTANDING DISPLAYED -- AND THE OBVIOUS DESIRE TO "COOL DOWN THE ISSUE," WITHOUT OF COURSE DENYING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US. "WE WILL NOW WAIT UNTIL THE SECRETARY COMES," HE SAID. AS HE CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION ON A VERY WAR NOTE, BEGIN ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE FROM ME AT ANYTIME, EVEN ON THE SABBATH, ANY WASHINGTON REACTION TO OUR TALK YESTERDAY.

20. THIS WHOLE EPISODE IS CLASSIC BEGIN. EMOTION, CONVICTION, THIN-SKIN, HYPERSENSITIVITY TO WORDS, LEGALISMS, EMPHASIS ON HONOR AND PERSONAL TRUST, ETC. IT WON'T BE THE LAST.

UNQUOTE VANCE

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